



*Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor*

**COMMISSION FOR  
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESERVATION**

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

**STAFF REPORT**



*Chris Ryer  
Director*

**May 14, 2019**

**REQUEST:** Renovate Building – Install New Window and Door Openings

**ADDRESS:** 409 Tyson Street (Howard Street Commercial Historic District)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval with Conditions

**APPLICANT:** Park Avenue Partners LLC

**STAFF:** Stacy Montgomery

**SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Howard Street Commercial Historic District

Situated within the historic retail core of Baltimore City, the Howard Street Commercial historic district demonstrates distinctive characteristics of modestly scaled 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture. The buildings in the district represented smaller, specialized retailers in buildings that transitioned from primarily residential to commercial use at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description

The building at 409 Tyson Street was constructed in the 1920s and was home to several furrier companies. 409 Tyson Street is a multi-story red brick warehouse building with decorative paired courses of brick headers on a tall base. The façade, which faces onto Tyson Street, is the most elaborate, with tall, multi-light windows recessed into deep, tall, square brick columns. The side and rear elevations are flat brick. The building is topped with a masonry cornice below a brick parapet wall on the façade and side elevations and a simple, coursed brick cornice on the rear elevation. Since the building was primarily used to hold valuable furs and accessories, the property has very few window and door openings on the sides and rear (north, south and east elevations).

The building is uniquely situated, with the façade fronting on Tyson Street, facing the rears of the buildings on North Howard Street. Historically, a number of other buildings used to face onto Tyson Street and the surrounding alleys (Inloes and Wilson) but the street now functions as an alley and 409 Tyson Street is the only remaining building facing on this alley. The most visible elevation is the north elevation, which can be seen from West Franklin Street. The top of the building is visible from Park Avenue, behind the rowhouses, and some portions are

visible north of the rowhouses. The southern elevation is currently visible from West Mulberry Street; however, the proposed new construction at 400 Park Avenue would obscure the visibility of this building once constructed.

## **BACKGROUND**

- This property is included within the boundaries of the Howard Street Commercial local historic district.
- This property is being developed in conjunction with the properties at 400 Park Avenue, 214 W. Mulberry Street, and 406-414 Park Avenue. The work to 400 Park Avenue and 214 W. Mulberry Street will be reviewed in this hearing as a separate item. The work to the properties at 406-414 Park Avenue will be reviewed at the staff level.
- The Commission previously determined that the rear portions of the buildings at 406-414 Park Avenue had lost integrity and did not contribute to the Howard Street Commercial historic district and could be demolished. The demolition has not yet occurred, but the plans submitted by the applicant reflect the approved demolition.

## **PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

The applicant proposes to create new openings and install windows and entrances on the south and east elevations of the building. The applicant will retain the existing historic openings and re-open the historic openings that have been bricked-in on the north, west and south elevations.

## **ANALYSIS**

The applicant proposes to install new window openings on the south and east elevations of the building to allow for more usable space within the building. Staff applied Chapter 1: Design Guidelines for Building Exteriors, specifically 1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric, 1.6 Doors, 1.7 Windows, and 1.18 Alterations and Additions.

### **1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric**

- *Identify and assess character-defining features when considering changes to a historic building. Retain character-defining features, such as roof shape, openings for doors and windows, and unique detailing, when repairing, maintaining, or altering a historic building.*

The character defining features of the building include the detailed brick façade on Tyson Street, the multi-light windows, and the decorative cornice. These items will not be impacted by the proposed alterations.

### **1.6 Doors**

- *In most cases do not create new entrances on primary facades. Locate new openings on walls that will result in the minimal loss of historic materials and features. Design new*

*openings to be compatible in size, scale, shape, proportion, material, and massing with the existing building features.*

The applicant proposes to relocate the front door to an existing window opening on the front façade, turn the existing door opening into a window, and create a new entry on the east elevation. The doors on the building are single-leaf, flat metal doors. The door on the front façade has a sign over the door that functions as a transom and a stone threshold. Given the orientation of the building and the low visibility of the façade, this change meets this guideline. The historic threshold should be moved to the new door location and a transom should be placed over the new door so it is in keeping with the height of the historic door.

The applicant proposes to install a new, storefront opening for the primary building entry on the rear elevation and a secondary storefront opening on the east elevation for the building tenants. The new entries will not be on the primary façade. A portion of the brick on the rear elevation will be removed to create these new openings. The proposed new openings are much larger in scale than the existing entries; however, given the scale of the building and the use of two-story windows on some elevations, a taller opening could be appropriate. The material and detailing should be modified to be compatible with the existing building features.

#### 1.7 Windows

- *In most cases, do not create new window openings or permanently block existing window openings on principal elevations.*
- *When required, locate new window openings on a secondary elevation that cannot be seen from a public right-of-way. Design newly installed windows to be compatible with historic windows and the overall character of the building.*

The proposed new window openings are not on the Tyson Street façade. The new windows will be on the south and east elevations. On the south elevation, the applicant proposes to install two rows of multi-light windows in line with and below the existing multi-light windows. The new windows proposed for the south elevation are of the same design as the existing windows, but smaller in size. When the building at 400 Park Avenue is constructed, the new windows on the south elevation will not be visible from West Mulberry Street.

The applicant proposes to install two new multi-light windows near the top of the northern portion of the building. These windows may be visible from the northern part of Avenue, near the intersection with West Franklin Street. The applicant also proposes to install 6 new multi-light windows and one large, modern, 3-story window on the southern portion of the east elevation. These windows will have a limited visibility from Park Avenue. They will be somewhat visible south of the rowhouses on Park Avenue, via Inloes Alley; however, the proposed new construction at 400 Park Avenue and the rowhouses on the west side of the 400 block of Park Ave. obscure nearly all of the windows from directly across the street.

The new windows generally meet the design guidelines. The large, modern, 3-story window is not compatible with the scale, configuration, and materials of the historic windows. This window should be altered to more closely match the scale, material and configuration of the historic building. The new windows that are being installed in the re-opened historic windows openings should also closely match the material and configuration of the historic windows.

#### 1.18 Alterations and Additions

- *Retain historic character defining features when planning alterations and additions to a historic building.*
- *Design alterations and additions to be compatible and sympathetic to the character of the historic building.*
- *Design and place new garage entrances and doors to be compatible with surrounding buildings. Do not place garage entrances on primary facades where there is no historic precedent. Place new garage openings on rear elevations whenever possible.*

The proposal generally meets these design guidelines. The design of the storefront entries on the east elevation and the large, multi-story window on the east elevation should be altered to be more compatible with the scale of the historic building features.

The applicant also proposes to install a garage door on the front façade in a section of the façade that was previously altered. As this was an industrial building that fronts directly onto the street, it is likely that there was historically a garage opening. In this site context, a garage door would be in keeping with the design guidelines.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

There is no neighborhood architectural review committee in this local historic district. Notice has been sent to the Downtown Partnership, Market Center Merchants Association, Mount Vernon Belvedere Association, and Baltimore Heritage.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Given the unique location of the building at 409 Tyson Street, the proposed new window and door openings are not inappropriate; however, staff recommends minor modifications to the designs so they are more compatible with the historic character of the building.

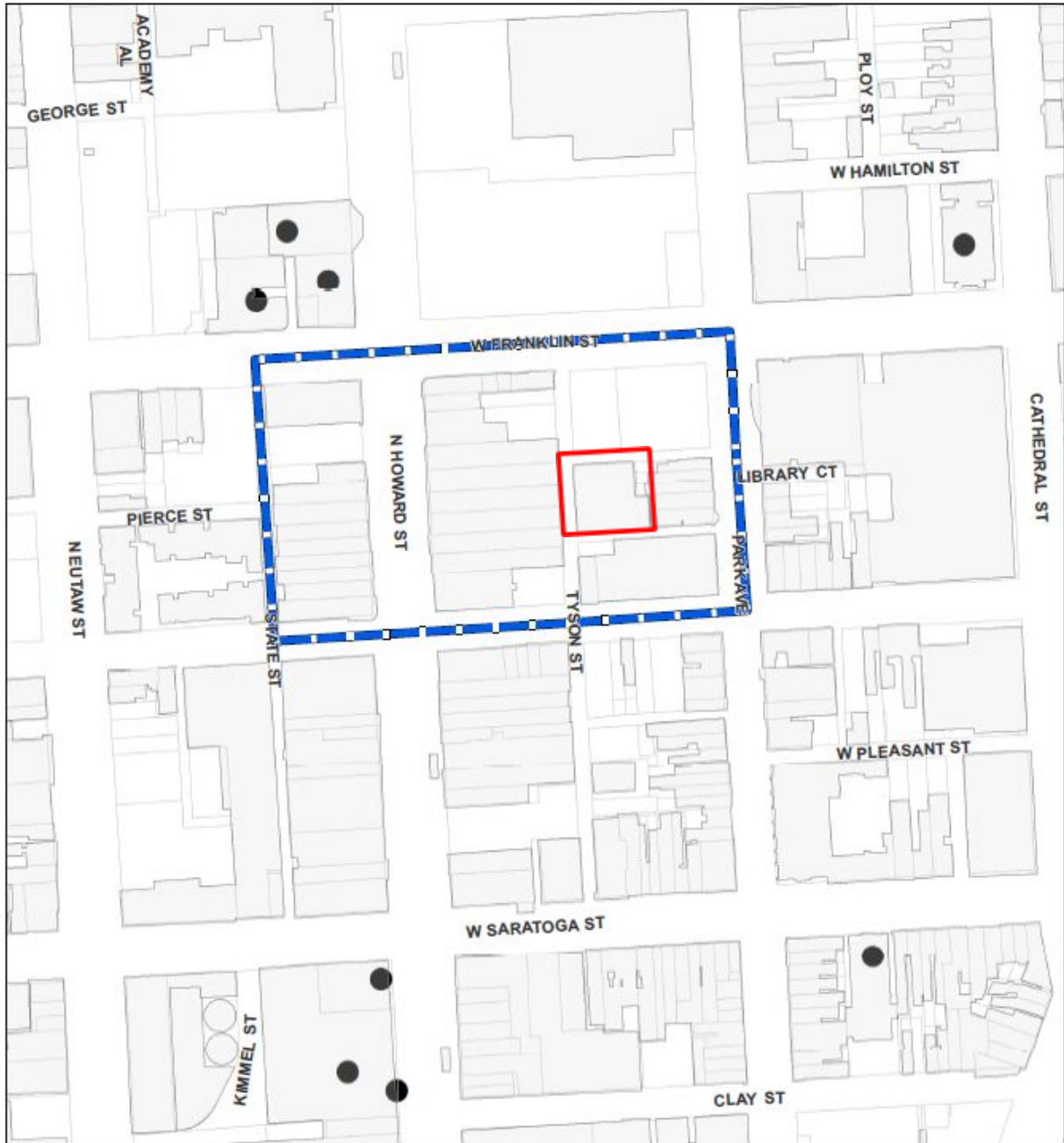
**Staff recommends approval of the proposal with final details to go to staff for review and with the following conditions:**

- 1) On the Tyson Street façade, the historic door threshold should be moved to the new door location and a transom should be placed over the new door so it is in keeping with the height of the historic door.**



- 2) On the east elevation, the material and detailing of the new storefront openings should be modified to be compatible with the existing building features.
- 3) On the east elevation, the large, modern, 3-story window should be altered to more closely match the scale, material and configuration of the historic building.
- 4) On all elevations, the new windows that are being installed in the re-opened historic windows openings should also closely match the material and configuration of the historic windows.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Holcomb".

**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

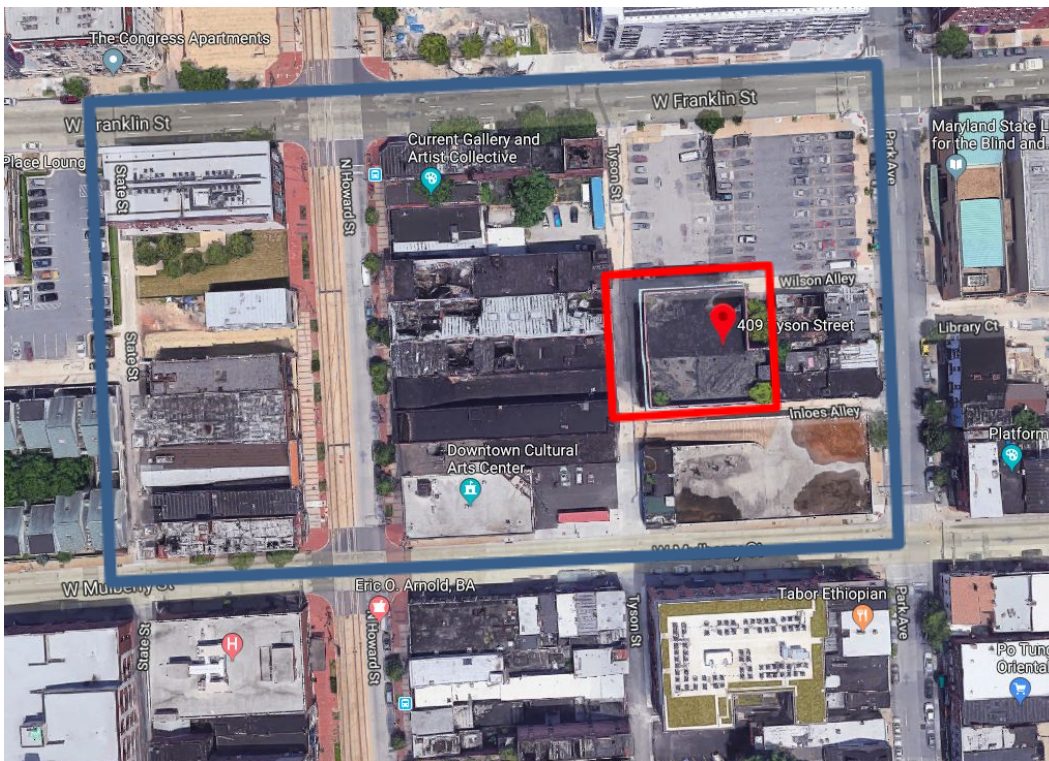


## Howard Street Commercial Historic District

 Howard Street Commercial District  
 Existing Baltimore City Landmarks



Aerial Photographic Map of Baltimore and Metropolitan District of Baltimore County, 1927  
<http://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handke/1774.2/37593>)



Aerial view of the historic district and the surrounding buildings





409 Tyson Street facade from South





409 Tyson Street southern elevation from West Mulberry Street with the lot of 400 Park Avenue in front of it.



409 Tyson Street North elevation from parking lot north of Wilson Alley





409 Tyson Street from eastern elevation Park Avenue



409 Tyson Street eastern elevation from Park Avenue with lot of 400 Park Avenue in front